

## 2018 Michigan Good Food Summit

### Breakout Session #7: Big Ideas Grow from Great Partnerships

10:45 am

**Speakers:** Artina Sadler, Community Foundation of Greater Flint; Pam Bailey, Flint Fresh; Erin Caudell, Flint Fresh

**Challenge:** Developing sustainable projects to address needs of Flint community and meet communities' expectations while meeting grant expectations and budget limitations through partnership engagement.

Prior to the Flint Water Crisis, in 2014, funding was received by Flint Community Foundation for grants to mitigate challenges faced by neighborhoods and its members. As grant funds increased and communities in Flint become more desponded with the onset of the Flint Water Crisis the role of a community navigator become more challenging.

#### Artina Sadler:

- Identified community priority programs with community members
- Partner with a “mom from the community”, Pam Bailey to promote community participation
- Established community partnerships across Flint
- Assured that each project was not only supported but also partners agreed to implement.
- Developed an agreement plan (contract) for each partner to complete and sign
- Determine how to implement various programs and meet expectations (as was feasible)
- Determine how to evaluate the projects and work as it is being done and completed

#### Partnership Work Plant/Agreement

- Provided a framework of who was responsible for what of the projects
- Served as support for additional grants, showing what community partners wanted and commitment
- Created an established understanding to refer to as things did/didn't get done

Partners were sought and identified that are committed to implementing work.

5 Implementing Organizations:

1. Local grocers: Erin Caudell's business
2. Neighborhood engagement HUB
3. Flint food works/farmers market
4. Community foundation of greater Flint 5013c
5. YMCA: Provide expertise in community building

Organizations that support the work in Flint: Flint hospitals, Flint businesses, Flint institutions

## **Projects Development under this Partnership work plan/arrangement**

### **1. The Mobile Market**

provided fresh fruits and vegetables to families throughout Flint area where food markets and public transportation were scarce.

#### **A. Challenges to effectively address this project included:**

- Members of the committee initially wanted a new bus with all the bells and whistles.
  - Meeting budget capacity with actual needs vs committees wishes.
  - Needed to develop a program that was sustainable: AKA enough funds to not just buy a bus but maintain it and the Mobile Market (renovation and upkeep of bus, purchase food, hired persons, a licensed bus driver, a big bus on urban roads)
  - Identify organizations that would RUN this program (beyond say yes we want..).
  - Get sincere commitment from organizations that say they will..
- Thus the partnership agreement was formed.

#### **B. Progress**

- Initially used a bus for 2days/week that was also used by a tool rental
- Established routes and reputation
- Purchased a bus, then several and had them retrofitted with 21 century style

### **2. Veggie market box**

- Provided a box of fresh produce weekly that was delivered to door of customer
- Was similar to CSA
- Met needs for those without means to get to market
- Food came from group purchases from Flint Market
- Erin Caudell (from Flint Farmers market) set up financial template to use for this project
- Feared it would compete with Farmers Market but actually saw an increase
- Served those who couldn't use public transportation and had no other means

### **3. Flint food HUB:**

- Found a building (finally) and created an environment to promote all phases of food development.
- Included a water filtration system to remove lead.
- Full processing kitchen
- truck storage facility, all ops happen here, will start farm to school, veggies box, mobile market.
- Processing
- Cooling area
- Sales office

- Conference room
- Processing kitchen
- Washing areas
- For additional info visit: Flint Fresh.com

A copy of the partnership agreement form can be obtained from Artina via email (asadler@cfgf.org).

## Q&A

**Q. Will the hub consider catering for a source of income?** We ask is this sustainable? Some of our partners are caterers, we don't want to step on their toes.

**Q. How have you found the Partnership agreement to work? Is it effective?** A. It's a non-binding MOU. We impose a time limit and then renew it with our partners if they are interested. This renewal is a discussion process with the partners and a chance to identify which organizations can do what.

It helps us id where the ball has dropped and who can pick it up again. This doc was very helpful as we were moving fast. Wish we had revisited it monthly to stop problems from being problems and adjust as needed. That is what we recommend for anyone using such a doc.

**Q. When did the Agreement not work?** A. An example: An organization decided to stop their MOU as it took longer than anticipated but if we had the conversation on a monthly level we could have addressed the problems or issues before it was too late. We think its important to have these conversations BEFORE the agreement ends. Remember partnerships don't just end and they do change, they're dynamic. The partnership agreement needs to be visited on a regular time period and allow a chance to fix problems if possible before agreement ends.

**Q. Which project do you think was most successful and why?** Flint Fresh was my (Artina's) favorite. But we had to learn food via each other as my background is community engagement, not food or nutrition. There's always strife amongst the committees but we have Sean (from Community Foundation), as a peace maker to help us see the path, its all of our challenge to fix, no finger pointing. Bottom line, we are honest about what we see and feel. This allows transition from partnership to relationship. A relationship starts when the partnership ends. "We don't throw away people. Projects come and go but people are always around"

**Q. What is your plan to become sustainable?** We have identified a plan that in 5 years we hope to become self-sustaining. Right now, we have grant dollars and continue to work toward sustainability, part of financial independence. We partner with the Food Bank, and they bring in the food and we help store it. We hope to work with networks and we provide the infrastructure and operationally they want partners that provide inputs. For example, we move it and the other organizations provides the food, or like we do now, we sell the food. We still have space to respond to community needs and our partners' ideas. Other processing is yet to

come for our Food Hub such as chopping dehydrating, steaming and cooking, not fermentation (YET). We want to use techniques to help to reduce food waste.

**Q. Do you accept other payments for food beyond cash?** Yes, we accept payment via SNAP, Bridge Card, or square.

**Q. Was SNAP difficult to obtain?** Erin Caudell did the work to get the program up and running, difficult to get the machines, had to call our senator!

**Q. What is your relationship with farmers?** We purchase everything. Farmers were setting their own prices but now lower prices as we have less grant money but want to be able to buy from small and large farmers so we are figuring out how we can be fair with pricing.

**Q. Do you accept Senior FRESH?** Senior FRESH is not yet accepted. We're researching it. We learned we need a funder in the county to support that. None found yet. Shared this problem with the senators during the senator tour.

**Q. How do you maintain a sound and healthy relationship with small community partnerships?**

Partnership engagements need to be fluid and engage in what the partner has to offer. Be fluid. You can do the easy thing or the right thing. We come from a place of respect and honesty, have those hard conversation. Anger can be result of honesty and respect. But must make sure the end of meeting there is a consensus by all!

**Q. Do the employees receive benefits?** Flint Fresh Employees which is a 5013c who have 7 staff members who do the work and are paid full benefits and equitable wages. These are important values to the organizations. We don't do volunteers as Flint needs jobs. Or we compensate them in some way for their work.

**Q. Do farmers deliver?** Yes.

Which is the most successful program they have? Veggie Box Market is the most successful.

**Q. Is the Board compensated?** No

**Q. Are all your partners non-profit?** Majority of partners are non-profit. Did partner with business to host mobile markets.

**Q. Mobile market vs expansion of mass transportation?** Had bussing to grocery stores and needed more! Access was enough. This was the best way to increase access.

**Q. How do you plan to grow or expand?** Expansion is anticipated to cover the county, beyond Flint.

**Q. Where do you source food?** First Flint, the Genesee county, then region, state in that order.

Vendor from Flint market goes to Eastern market and supplement with these products.

**Q. Most successful sites for Veggie Box?** Most profitable sites tend to be in businesses where people are not eating well. But senior centers buy little and single partners. Need to find a balance. Why is it not a profitable area, we need to figure that out. Mobile market is a presence very appreciated at places like senior centers.